Remarks

The Applicant has reviewed the Office action dated April 7, 2004 and thanks Examiner Patel for detailed review of the pending claims. In response to the Office action the Applicant has amended claims 1, 9, 11, 13 and 20. Accordingly, claims 1-20 remain pending in the present application. In the course of amending the claims no new matter has been added. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims in view of the amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-4 and 7-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,253,675 to St. Laurent, Jr. In view of the amendment to independent claim 1, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

U.S. Patent 4,253,675 to St. Laurent, Jr. discloses improvements of sealed shafts.

In contradistinction, amended claim 1 claims a boot for use with a joint including a body. The first end of the body has a generally tubular shape and a second end of the body has an annular sealing lip. An annular ridge is arranged on the body. At least one end of the sealing boot is reinforced with a rigid support material wherein the rigid support material is arranged between layers of the body.

St. Laurent, Jr. '675 does not disclose, teach or anticipate the present invention of claim 1, as amended. Specifically, St. Laurent, Jr. does not disclose a boot for use with a joint wherein the boot has a body with an annular ridge arranged on the body. Furthermore, St. Laurent, Jr. does not disclose a boot for use with a joint having at least one end of the sealing boot reinforced with a rigid support material wherein the rigid support material is arranged between layers of the body material. Nowhere does St. Laurent, Jr. disclose, teach or even suggest the use of a boot with a joint that has a rigid support material arranged between layers of a body material. In fact, St. Laurent, Jr. distinctly teaches away from any arrangement of a rigid support material arranged between layers of a body material. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that St. Laurent, Jr. '675 fails to disclose all of the limitations claimed by applicant in claim 1, as

amended. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1, as amended and the claims dependent therefrom overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and are allowable over this rejection.

Additionally, claims 1, 5-6, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,234,488 to Martin, et al. Again, in view of the amendments to the independent claims, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

U.S. Patent 6,234,488 to Martin, et al. discloses a heat shrinkable boot seal and method of installation.

In contradistinction, claim 1, as amended, claims a boot for use with a joint including a body. The first end of the body has a generally tubular shape and a second end of the body has an annular sealing lip. An annular ridge is arranged on the body. At least one end of the sealing boot is reinforced with a rigid support material wherein the rigid support material is arranged between layers of the body.

Martin et al. '488 does not disclose, teach or anticipate the present invention of claim 1, as amended. Specifically, Martin et al. does not disclose a boot for use with a joint wherein the boot has a body with an annular ridge arranged on the body. Nowhere does Martin et al. disclose, teach or even suggest the use any type of annular ridge on a boot or seal. In fact, Martin et al. specifically teaches away from any annular ridge because the boot seal as shown in the reference is a heat shrinkable material that is not capable of having any ridges thereon. In fact, any such ridges would be deformed during the heat-shrinking portion of the boot seal installation and hence, would not properly work as designed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Martin et al. '488 fails to disclose all of the limitations claimed by applicant in claim 1, as amended. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim1, as amended, and the claims dependent therefrom overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and are allowable over this rejection.

Further, claim 9, as amended, claims a boot having a body with an annular ridge on the body. The boot also is comprised of a flexible material and at least one end having a high stiffness and high strength material encapsulated within the flexible material for providing high stability and superior sealing.

Martin et al. '488 does not disclose, teach or anticipate the present invention of claim 9, as amended. Specifically, Martin et al. does not disclose a boot having a body with an annular ridge on the body. Furthermore, Martin et al. does not disclose a boot having a flexible material and at least one end having a high stiffness and high strength material encapsulated within a flexible material for providing high stability and superior sealing. Nowhere does Martin, et al. disclose, teach or even suggest the use of encapsulating a high strength material completely within a flexible material. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Martin et al. '488 fails to disclose all of the limitations claimed by applicant in claim 9, as amended. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 9, as amended and the claims dependent therefrom overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and are allowable over this rejection.

Finally, claims 1-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,382,634 to Fox et al. In view of the amendments to the independent claims, the Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

U.S. Patent 4,382,634 to Fox et al. discloses a material fracturing apparatus.

With respect to amended claim 1 and amended claim 9 Fox et al. does not disclose a boot having a body with at least one end of the boot reinforced with a rigid support material wherein the rigid support material is arranged between layers of the body material. Furthermore, with respect to claim 9, Fox et al. does not disclose a boot which is comprised of a flexible material and at least one end having a high stiffness and high strength material encapsulated within flexible material of the boot for providing high stability and superior sealing. Nowhere in Fox et al does it disclose, teach or even anticipate the use of a rigid support material arranged between layers of a body material in any such manner. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Fox et al. '634 fails to disclose all the limitations claimed by applicant in claims 1-12 as amended. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-12, as amended, overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and are allowable over this rejection.

In contradistinction, claim 13, as amended, claims a joint assembly having a shaft, a first joint part connected to the shaft and a second joint part cooperable with the first joint part to transmit torque there between. The joint assembly also includes a plurality of balls arranged between the first joint part and the second joint part. The joint assembly also includes a boot

having a first end contacting the shaft and a second end associated with the second joint part where in at least one of the boot ends is reinforced with a rigid support material.

Fox et al. '634 does not disclose, teach or anticipate the present invention of claim 13, as amended. Specifically, Fox, et al. does not disclose a joint assembly having a first joint part connected to a shaft and a second joint part cooperable with the first joint part to transmit torque there between. Furthermore, Fox et al. '634 does not disclose a plurality of balls arranged between the first joint part and the second joint part. Nowhere does Fox et al. disclose, teach or even suggest one of the boot ends being reinforced with a rigid support material. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Fox et al. '634 fails to disclose all of the limitations claimed by applicant in claim 13, as amended. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13, as amended and the claims dependent therefrom overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and are allowable over this rejection.

In contradistinction, claim 20, as amended claims a joint assembly for use on a vehicle including a first joint part and a second joint part. The joint assembly further includes a cage arranged between the first joint part and the second joint part.

Fox et al. '634 does not disclose, teach or anticipate the present invention of claim 20, as amended. Specifically, Fox et al. does not disclose a joint assembly for use on a vehicle having a first joint part and a second joint part with a cage arranged between the first joint part and the second joint part. Nowhere does Fox et al. disclose, teach or even suggest the use of a joint assembly for use on a vehicle. In fact, Fox et al. only teaches an apparatus for fracturing material and therefore cannot disclose or teach, even with conjecture, a joint assembly for use on a vehicle. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Fox et al. '634 fails to disclose all of the limitations claimed by applicant in claim 20, as amended. Therefore, it respectfully submitted that claim 20, as amended overcomes the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and is allowable over this rejection.

Conclusion

The Applicant believes that the previously described amendments to the claims place the application in condition for allowance. The Applicant respectfully request that the application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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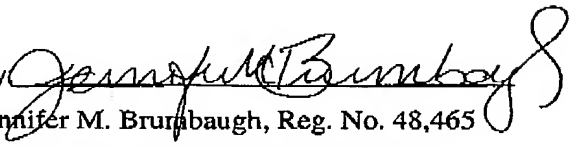
By 

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